

TILLEY AWARD 2003

TACKLING CITY CENTRE ASSAULTS  
IN FOYLE DISTRICT COMMAND UNIT

CRIME & DISORDER REDUCTION CATEGORY

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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## TACKLING CITY CENTRE ASSAULTS IN FOYLE DCU

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Londonderry is the largest City in the North West of Northern Ireland. Organised attacks on police officers coupled with a high terrorist threat make day-to-day policing problematic and complex. The City Centre in Londonderry has suffered from high and rising levels of 'Offences Against the Person' in recent years.

In the year 2001/2002, Assault was the highest volume crime in Foyle DCU, with 42% occurring in the City Centre. The problem of City Centre assaults was highly publicised in the media increasing peoples perceptions that it was no longer safe to socialise in the City. An Assault Reduction Strategy was set up to tackle the assault problem in the City during September 2002,

Analysis was carried out to outline the precise problem to be tackled and identify likely causes and a range of possible solutions, making recommendations on mechanisms that could be used to achieve the objectives set out. Information was used from a wide variety of sources. A number of underlying causes for City Centre Assaults were identified, including assaults being largely concentrated around pubs and clubs at closing time, problems with crowd dispersal and lack of transport provision, high proportion of assaults resulting in serious injury and evidence of gang related assaults.

The recommendations formulated to deal with the problems identified were both evidence and research based. These recommendations formed the basis of the strategy. They included a number of problem solving initiatives that were implemented in conjunction with multi-agency partnerships, combined with targeted police operations involving high visibility policing. Due to political sensitivities, the police could not front the assaults strategy, but another agency, the City Centre Initiative, agreed to front the project, thus broadening ownership of the problem and responses.

As a result, City Centre assaults have fallen by 43% in a 6-month period (compared to same period in the previous year) - equivalent to approximately 183 fewer assaults in the six-month period. Various meetings with partners take place at regular intervals, providing updates on progression, successes and actions requiring review in order to meet agreed objectives.

The results of this project have far surpassed police and partner expectations, and highlighted the value of POP projects in crime reduction. The principles have been adopted as Best Practice within Foyle DCU, and are regularly used in a variety of other problems, firmly backed by management-

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## BACKGROUND TO PROJECT

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The City of Londonderry has a population of 107,000 and is situated in the North West of Northern Ireland, on the border with the Republic of Ireland. The City is divided by the River Foyle but is also divided along sectarian lines, with the City Centre located on the nationalist West side of the DCU.

Londonderry has had a long history of politically motivated riots and organised attacks on police. The terrorist threat from paramilitary organisations still remains high in the City making day-to-day policing problematic and complex. There is a sense of hatred towards the police and this is engrained into children living in the West side of the City from an early age, and continues into their adult lives. No police officers now live in the City and there are still shops that will not serve police when they are in uniform.

Certain areas of the City can only be policed in armoured police landrovers due to the ongoing fear of attack; therefore high visibility foot patrolling by police is an option that requires detailed risk assessments, and back up with public-order trained Tactical Support Units (TSGs).

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## SCANNING

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Offences Against the Person has been Foyle DCU's highest volume crime for many years. This was regularly highlighted in local media with reports of violence in the City centre, including attacks by gangs. The local council had publicly identified the problem in the press, and more recently local licensees had cited their concerns about a reduction in the number of weekend socialisers in the City, which was adversely affecting their business. Local residents and shop owners were unhappy with the situation as the City had got a reputation of being a violent City, and the 'assaults Capital' of the province.

Until the strategy was implemented, police response to the problem was reactive, involving stationing of a TSG in the City centre area at weekends. No outside agencies had ever been involved in trying to tackle the problem.

It was decided that the DCU would try to set up an Assaults Reduction Strategy, which would consist of a number of problem solving initiatives implemented in conjunction with multi-agency partnerships to tackle the assault problem in the City. Analysis of all assaults data in Londonderry provided a starting point to developing the Strategy.

The initial findings of analysis showed that:

- 'Offences against the person' was the highest volume crime in Foyle District Command Unit, accounting for approximately ¼ of all recorded offences. This equated to 1948 assaults in a twelve-month period – equivalent to 5 assaults per day.
- More than ¼ of all assaults resulted in serious injury, including broken bones/teeth, stitches or staples and head injuries.
- Approximately 10% of all assaults involved the use of a weapon or dangerous object – 2/3 of which were bottles/glasses
- Almost half of all assaults in the DCU occurred in the City Centre – equivalent to approximately 16 assaults per week in the City centre

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## ANALYSIS

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Before developing the Assault Reduction Strategy a problem profile was produced to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the problem. This outlined the precise problem to be tackled, and identified likely causes and a range of possible solutions, making recommendations on mechanisms that could be used to achieve the objectives set out. (See Appendix A).

As with all pieces of analysis, a list of all possible angles that could be used to understand the problem were compiled, using the 5W's and an H principle (Who, What, Where, When, Why and How). We then considered what information was required and how it could be obtained.

### Data Sources

While analysis was carried out by Foyle police analysts, a number of police personnel and other agencies were involved in providing information. The following data sources were used to compile this piece of work.

- Crime Data – All police data from the PSNI crime recording system, and Command and Control System
- Data from Local Police Response Units, Tactical Support Units, CID, Community Involvement Unit, CCTV Liaison Officers, Licensing Officer, Claims Investigation Officer
- Press Releases on City Centre Disorder
- Council reports – On Licensing, Fire Safety Checks
- Home Office Publications
- Other PSNI Police Analyst Reports
- Other anecdotal evidence from local business owners, the City Hospital, Victim Support

### *Information gaps*

Obviously this list is not exhaustive, but it was recognised that due to political sensitivities it would be difficult to obtain information from some sources. For example, while it would have been useful to get hospital information to get an indication of the level of under-reporting of assault in the City Centre, the local Health Board weren't prepared to co-operate. However, contacts have developed with the hospital throughout the course of the project, and its possible this type of analysis could be carried out in the future.

Other information gaps included gaps caused by poor crime recording – for example the exact locations of where assaults occurred were often not recorded, also victim details were often lacking in detail.

### Analysis of problem

The problem was analysed using the 5W's and an H principle and the Problem Analysis Triangle (Victim, Location, Offender), to identify patterns and trends. Crime data for a 12-month period and information from all the sources listed above was used to examine the problem



*What:*

Crime pattern analysis helped to ascertain the dynamics of the particular problem. Offences Against the Person had been the highest volume crime in the DCU for several years. While the problem had been tackled previously approaches tended to be police focussed and fragmented, with no clear objectives. In addition, no evaluation was carried out of past operations.

Analysis quickly highlighted that City Centre assaults were a particular problem. Video footage showed the problems in dispersing crowds, and highlighted the lack of transport options and provision.

*When:*

Time Pattern analysis revealed the key times for City Centre assaults, with the majority occurring between the hours of 23.00 – 04.00 at weekends, and between 00.00 – 03.00 on weeknights, coinciding with pub/club closing times.

It also revealed that both victim and offender were usually under the influence of alcohol when the assault took place.

*Where:*

- Information was examined to identify the type of location where City Centre assaults were occurring – 87% occurred on the street or in/outside commercial premises (mainly bars and clubs).
- Hotspot analysis revealed that 69% of City Centre assaults occurred in just 10 streets in the City. These streets were all areas where large numbers of people socialise at night. CCTV footage from these streets showed that the long time taken for crowds to disperse at closing times was partly responsible for the problem of on-street assaults.
- Half of all assaults that occurred in/outside commercial premises were found to occur at just 5 establishments. Anecdotal evidence from police officers who had dealt with incidents at these premises and from the licensing officer suggested that the type of people frequenting these venues, the attitudes of doorstaff and the serving policies of the premises all contributed to the levels of assault there.
- Finally we looked at victim statements to ascertain where they were going when they were assaulted. It was found that many had left clubs and were on their way either to look for taxis, to fast food establishments, or home. 95% of all victims lived within the DCU, giving some indication of where crime prevention advice and media campaigns should be targeted.

*Who:*

Analysis was undertaken of both offender and victim. A detailed victim profile was drawn up to identify who a typical victim might be, in order to focus proactive interventions. It revealed that a typical victim is male aged 18-35, living in the DCU, and more likely to suffer serious assault than other age groups. Many were students or unemployed.

Offenders were usually young males, under the influence of alcohol, and many carried out the offence as part of a gang.

*How:*

Detailed analysis of why City Centre Assaults were occurring in Londonderry was also provided.

- The problem is largely concentrated around pubs and clubs at pub closing times. Both the IP and culprit were often under the influence of alcohol
- There are problems with crowd dispersal in the City at weekends, and a lack of transport provision – video footage revealed crowds spilling onto the road, trying to flag down taxis
- More than one-quarter of all assaults result in serious injury, and approximately 10% in the time period examined involved the use of a weapon, two-thirds of which were bottles/glasses

- CCTV footage revealed the existence of gang-related assaults in the DCU – this gave credibility to the '7-Up Gang' theory. [Rumour had it that a gang carrying out assaults existed in the DCU, where victims were randomly picked based on being the 7<sup>th</sup> person to pass – such as the 7<sup>th</sup> person to wear a blue shirt, or the 7<sup>th</sup> person with short hair].
- There was a high level of underage drinking in the DCU combined with a sizeable amount of assault victims in the 11-17 year age bracket (13%).

#### *Why:*

A number of causes for the assault problem were identified.

- There was no defined procedure as to frequency and structure of licensed premises checks, and to follow-up action for any breaches noted. Local TSG's reported that when checks were carried out pubs were often found to be serving alcohol after hours. Interviews with pub managers revealed the attitude 'why should I lose out financially by not serving after hours when everyone else does'. This lack of a level financial playing field was contributing to the assault problem. In addition there was no incentive to participate in the newly established Doorman's Registration Scheme.
- There was no information sharing between bar-owners/managers and no forum to do so. However, many business owners were concerned about the City's reputation for violence, feeling it had financial implications.
- Large numbers of youths congregating in the City Centre are also a problem. Bar-owners cited that underage youths often hung about outside their premises at night at weekends. Police Juvenile Liaison officers also suggested there was a high level of underage drinking in the City – backed up by reports from the hospital of admissions of youths suffering from alcohol consumption – these youths were becoming victims of assaults (13% of all victims in this age group)
- Local business owners commented that assaults and City Centre disorder appeared to be worse on occasions when TSGs simply took up position in the City Centre for the night and remained there, than on nights when they moved around the City.
- There was an information gap as to the extent to which criminal injury claims were bogus. With criminal injury compensation currently at approximately £1000 per stitch in Northern Ireland there was scepticism that some 'victims' actually injured themselves while under the influence of alcohol then alleged an assault had taken place and made a claim

## Recommendations

A number of possible solutions were formulated to deal with the problem – these were evidence and research based, using examples of Best Practice from within the force, from other forces and from research material in Home Office Publications. Material from the Cardiff visit to observe the TASC project was also used.

Possible solutions included:

- Targeted police operations in the City including high visibility policing, with foot patrolling targeted to specific times on specific streets, based on crime pattern analysis. By moving police around the City to follow patterns when and where assaults were most likely to occur and where most pedestrian flow is, this would give the impression to socialisers of police presence throughout the City
- Documented procedures for licensed premises checks and dossier of violations maintained – thus providing a level financial playing field for all pub-owners
- Improving night-time transport provisions in the City – a number of measures were suggested including the establishment of a night-time bus service and the provision of new strategically placed taxi ranks to draw crowds away from hotspot locations



- Establishment of a Bar-Owners Forum – to initially address violations of current licensing agreements, reducing the number of bottles/glasses on the street, the establishment of a radio link between doorstaff of pubs, and participation in the Doorman's Registration Scheme
- Improved investigation into gang-related assaults and viewing of CCTV footage, with view to better detection of offenders. It was also agreed that CCTV tapes of all alleged assaults would be requested and examined. If no assault was identified through tapes and further investigation bogus claimants would be prosecuted
- Education and media campaigns, targeted at likely victims and likely offenders

Various indicators to measure the success of each of these responses were also set.

### Partnership Approach

Analysis highlighted the necessity for a multi-agency approach involving vintners, transport providers, local Council, the University, and the City Centre Initiative (a group involved in attracting inward investment into the City and responsible for the running of the CCTV system). The challenge was gaining co-operation from these agencies with the police

### Further analysis

As the strategy was implemented further analysis was required. Some examples include:

- Ongoing review of hotspots
- Ongoing review of number of assaults occurring in/outside specific establishments
- Production of profile of typical offender for use in targeted media campaign
- Analysis of results of operations
- Further analysis of crime data for evaluation purposes



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## RESPONSE

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### Analysis induced responses

As highlighted above, analysis provided a number of possible solutions to the problem, which were both evidence- and research-based. All possible responses were considered but a number of factors featured in what was chosen and what wasn't – including whether they were achievable, resources required, budgetary constraints, capabilities of partners, time-scale necessary for implementation, the political situation. Responses also had to be assessed in conjunction with other priorities such as other current crime-reduction strategies in progress and counter-terrorist patrols.

All chosen responses were costed – some could be covered by the station budget, for others it was necessary to look outside the DCU for possible funding. A chart, used to highlight costings in the project, is included in Appendix B. This was used to ascertain if the options chosen would be worthwhile compared to the costs involved.

### Implementation plan

When responses were chosen, an implementation plan was drawn up. This listed all actions required within the force, and all actions required for partnerships to be established. Actions were prioritised, and allocated to individuals, with an anticipated implementation date listed.

The strategy has been implemented under supervision of the Operations Manager, who initially tasked all relevant personnel. Personnel were then given ownership for individual strands of the project with bi-weekly progress meetings. The plan also outlined indicators which would be used to evaluate progress of the project.

Due to political constraints it was not possible for police to front the strategy publicly. Partners were brought on board by using the City Centre Initiative to front the project. A number of levers and incentives were used to encourage participation (These included legislative, financial, law enforcement and community safety issues). All measures are aimed at improving the nighttime economy while keeping it within the law. The police aim was to encourage respect for the law within the City Centre, and to enforce it by agreement. This principle is also used in other Crime Reduction Strategies in the DCU. Actions taken are outlined below.

### Responses implemented

#### *Partnership with local Bar-owners/Managers*

Bar-owners were concerned at rising public liability insurance due to claims taken for assaults at their premises, and this was used as an incentive to encourage participation in the project. All licensed premises owners were individually visited and a number of key agreements reached

- Establishment of a Bar-Owners Forum – all licensees were invited to join the Forum – this gives the opportunity to discuss relevant issues and apply common policies.
- Documented procedures were drawn up for licensed premises checks and a dossier of violations maintained. Two violations result in licensees being reported for prosecution. This provides a level financial playing field for all pub-owners
- A league table was drawn up identifying pubs where the number of assaults were above the normal range – managers of these establishments were briefed by the DCU licensing officer of their position, and a plan of action drawn up to tackle the problem. This is reviewed every two months.



#### *Partnership with Translink*

A partnership was set up with Translink (local bus provider) to improve transport provisions in the City. 3 routes have been identified, requiring 3 buses doing 3 runs on Friday and Saturday nights. Funding applications are ongoing.

#### *Partnership with the Local Council*

- Agreement to make Doorman Registration a condition of licensing, once enough doormen have been successfully trained
- Fire Safety Department provided advice to all licencees re policy on fire safety and overcrowding. Police provide advice on methods of estimating numbers in premises, and both police and fire officers carry out random checks. The local Fire Authority now receives details of all licenses issued. They also produced a bulletin re. legislation (See Appendix C)

#### *Partnership with Department of Environment (Roads Division)*

- A 3 year strategy has been drawn up to improve the flow of traffic at night in pedestrian areas
- Discussions on the provision of new strategically placed taxi ranks to draw crowds away from hotspot locations have identified a number of possible locations – currently awaiting planning approval

#### *Partnership with local University*

The university currently enrolls 3000 students, and this is expanding annually. They were initially asked to participate in the strategy to enhance student safety

- Police provided flyers for all students concentrating on the message of staying out of trouble (See Appendix D)
- The University initially turned down a request to consider production of an advertisement for local TV station as part of their media studies course. This has been reviewed as the partnership has improved and has now been agreed.

#### *Proactive policing*

- Targeted police operations in the City at weekends using high visibility policing, backed up by TSG cover, includes foot patrolling targeted to specific times on specific streets, based on crime pattern analysis. By moving police around the City to follow patterns when and where assaults were most likely to occur and where most pedestrian flow is, socialisers are given the impression of police presence throughout the City (See Appendix E). Video cameras are used in these operations and if socialisers are observed leaving premises with bottles/glasses, footage is retained and shown to relevant bar-owners. Videing also acts as a deterrent to public disorder by those in the vicinity. The foot-patrolling pattern is reviewed every two months, and new Crime Pattern Analysis carried out to reflect changes in hotspot locations/times. Changes also occur as new premises are opened up etc.
- A Video Investigation Unit has been set up to view tapes of all assaults and City Centre Disorder. Stills of offenders are made and culprits identified using the Dedicated Source Unit. Even if the victim refuses to make a statement, police will still prosecute for disorder offences. Any bogus reports are also followed up and culprits prosecuted.

#### *Education and media campaigns, targeted at likely victims and likely offenders*

- In addition to the flyers mentioned above, a poster was produced by a professional PR company and distributed widely around the City. Rather than targeting this solely at the victim, it also aims to address would-be offenders too. (See Appendix F)
- An advert, financed by the Northern Ireland Office (who pay out compensation on criminal injury claims), has been shown on local TV, screened before periods when assaults are likely to peak (Eg. Christmas, St Patrick's Day Festival). Four local

businessmen also financed a second advert. The next advert will be made by local media students

- Stills of offenders in gang related assaults were published in a local nationalist newspaper in a bid to identify offenders – this was the first time a nationalist newspaper cooperated and indeed endorsed police actions in the City
- A number of press and television interviews were undertaken by police, partners and the CCI. A member of the public whose son was convicted of GBH following a fight where the other person suffered brain damage also gave interviews on local radio, encouraging young people to think before striking out in a human-interest appeal.

### Difficulties encountered in implementation

A number of difficulties were encountered, which required some review of how actions could be changed to get the desired outcome.

- As mentioned the police could not front the project, but partners were brought on board by using the CCI to front project - this broadened ownership of the project.
- One recommendation was the establishment of a Radio link in bars, with a view to information sharing and a common banning policy. Police would monitor the frequency in order to respond quickly to any disturbances. This idea was rejected by Bar-Owners because of police involvement. The desired response has now been changed. Instead, the Group has, with police advice, registered the group with the Information Commissioner so they can share information within the Data Protection Act, on gangs, known troublemakers etc.
- There was a political backlash following publication of photographs of offenders in the local newspaper, with republican groups claiming this was an infringement on human rights. Although the matter reached national NI news, the editor, with police back-up, justified his actions and 2 out of 4 successful detections ensued.
- To date the local hospital has refused to provide any hospital data on admissions involving assault. But a relationship has developed and has encouraged more responsible reporting to the press on the hospitals part. Negotiations are ongoing for an information sharing protocol to be set up.



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## ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

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The strategy has now been implemented for 8 months. Evaluation of results to date is discussed in the next section.

### Methods of Evaluation

It was decided that various methods of evaluation would be used in order to follow the progress of the strategy.

- Various statistics were used as indicators to the change in City Centre Assaults on a monthly basis. Indicators used include overall assaults, serious assaults, assaults in or outside bars and clubs, and assaults involving weapons, age of victims
- Various debriefings take place both with police personnel, and between partners involved in the strategy. Police debriefings have taken place on a fortnightly basis, providing updates on progress, achievements and failures, and reviewing any changes that would need to be made, in order to meet objectives. The implementation plan was then changed accordingly.
- Police personnel carried out one to one visits with all the licensees, at regular intervals giving an update on the Strategy implementation. This was a good opportunity to receive feedback and explore new ideas with stakeholders.
- Any violations of licensing laws, changes in levels of assault at premises, and footage showing punters leaving premises with bottles are also discussed, with a view to agreeing actions to address these issues. The training of doormen is also discussed.
- Regular meetings took place between various external groups and police in order for the agency involved and the police to share information on what they achieved since the previous meeting – this includes meetings with all the partners mentioned in the previous section.
- Press reports related to City centre violence are monitored to assess public opinion on the Strategy and how it has been implemented.

### *Who was Involved in the Evaluation*

Obviously a number police personnel have been involved in the ongoing evaluation of the assault strategy. Others involved include:

- Local Analysts provide statistical evaluation on a monthly basis.
- Various outside agencies have been involved in the evaluation by providing details to police personnel on their progression, success or failure (details provided below). They are also a useful source of changed attitudes eg. Bar-owners provide useful information on changes in attitudes of both socialisers and doormen.
- The general public have been involved indirectly in the evaluation by using public perceptions as gauge how well the strategy is perceived to be working.
- In progress the University is carrying out a study to evaluate fear of crime amongst its student population.

It has been agreed that at the end of June (when the project has been running for nine months) an impartial outside agency should be employed to carry out an external evaluation and validation of the project.

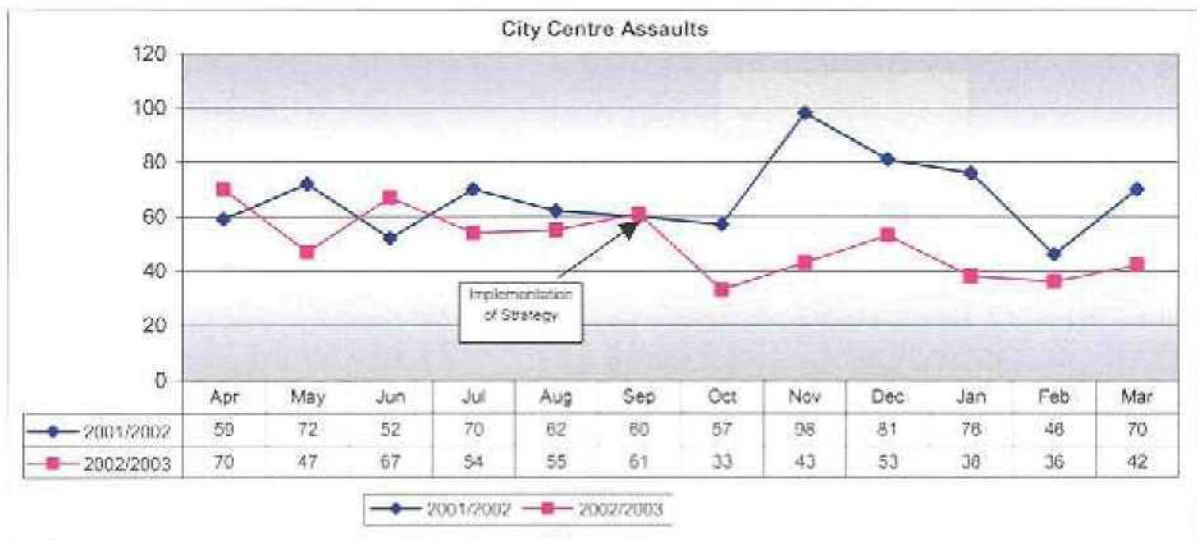
### Data Used in Evaluation and Assessment

- All crime data was captured and recorded on computerised systems.
- Police operational returns from the High visibility beats in the City Centre were used to evaluate costs, compared to number of arrests which took place and numbers of assaults reported on nights when operation was running.
- CCTV tapes were requested in all instances of City Centre violence for use in the Video Identification Unit
- Video footage from weekend police operations was also used to highlight breaches of agreement re confiscation of bottles
- The licensing officer provides details on violations of licensing regulations
- The Council provides data on participation in the Doormen's Registration Scheme.
- Newspaper articles are used as anecdotal evidence to help gauge stakeholder and public perceptions of the assaults problem and success of the project. (See Appendix G)
- The council has provided other data, which to date has not been used in evaluation of the strategy. This includes various entertainment guidelines for licensees to follow in their establishments such as 'Guidelines for Safer Dancing'. This data was discarded because there is no remit for enforcement of these guidelines

### Meeting the Objectives

#### Reduction of City Centre Assaults

The main aim of the crime and reduction strategy was to reduce the number of City centre assaults (with a target of more than 8% set). In order to measure this the number of assaults that occurred in the city centre in the six months since the strategy began were compared to the same six months in the previous year. In this context, City centre assaults have fallen by 43% since the implementation of the strategy – this is equivalent to 183 fewer assaults in the six-month period.





*Implement a media strategy to raise public awareness of the assaults problem*

The numerous press releases regarding the assault strategy, coupled with the marketing campaign involving television ads, posters, and flyers have increased the general public's awareness of the assault problem in the City, and of what the major stakeholders are trying to do to tackle the problem. The media campaign appears to have helped to reduce the fear of assault in the City centre and has helped to improve people's perceptions of the police and what they can do to help in the City. The strategy was mainly aimed at people aged 18-35, and recent analysis shows that the proportion of assaults in this age group has decreased.

The publication of stills showing perpetrators of City centre violence in the local Nationalist paper indicates the progress that has been made by adopting partnerships between the police and various agencies. The increased media coverage, coupled with rigorous police investigations has resulted in the clearance rate for Offences against the Person in the City Centre rising from an average of 12.3% before the strategy began to 19.7% since the implementation.

*Multi-Partnership Approach*

Various successful partnerships have been formed since the strategy began:

□ City Centre Initiative

Following the agreement of the C.C.I. to front the assaults strategy meetings with CCI employees have continued and partnerships strengthened. The C.C.I. is currently aiding in funding applications for late night transport. Because the C.C.I. fronted the project various groups that would never openly work with police have come on board. This is the one thing that could have caused the whole project to fail, but instead partners are now endorsing police actions

□ Bar-owners/Managers Forum

The forum is now well established, with regular meetings. A copy of the agenda for each meeting is forwarded to police and police input is often requested. The Group is registered with the Information Commissioner and now regularly shares information. Matters discussed to date include a strategy for preventing bottle/glass related injuries, involvement in the Doorman's Registration Scheme, Universal Scheme for ID Checking and Confiscation of false ID's, and a Universal Banning Policy

To date there have been 32 doorpersons trained under the Door Supervisors Registration Scheme, with a sharp increase in the number of applications to participate in the Course

□ Individual meetings with bar and club owners to discuss the licensing rules

Individual one-to-one meetings between bar owners and police continue. Following the initial consultation and the 'level playing field' agreed with bar-owners re. licensing violations, police entry to any premises to carry out checks is now facilitated. This agreement was a huge step forward as the majority bars and clubs in the City previously refused police entry to the establishments. Various licensing checks have been made and to date 3 premises have been reported for prosecution for violations. A number of owners have also been spoken to and shown footage of people leaving their premises with bottles.

□ Meetings with Translink

A number of meetings have taken place with the local transport providers regarding the provision of late night buses. Routes and numbers of buses have been agreed but funding has not yet been finalised.

□ Meeting with the University of Ulster

The University Media Studies Department have recently agreed to produce an advert for screening on local television. The Behavioural Studies Department are researching what makes people offend and are looking at best practice throughout the world to see if police interventions could be effective in this area.



#### *Investigate the 'Myth' of a City Centre Assault Gang*

The Video Identification Team has been very successful to date. Results include 22 offenders identified, arrested and charged, with a further 8 identified yet to be arrested.

#### *Reduce the Number of Serious Assaults*

Since the implementation of the strategy the number of assaults involving injury have fallen by 3% - and significantly the monthly average of serious assaults in the City have been reduced from 23 per month to 13 per month.

#### *Reduce the number of assaults in or outside licensed premises*

Prior to the introduction of the strategy ten licensed premises were identified, where the number of assaults that occurred either in or outside the premises were above the 'normal' range. This number has now reduced to 5 premises.

The main offender which had 47 assaults recorded in a 12 month period has gone from 1 assault per week to just over 1 per month. The majority of doormen at this premise have undergone training and are registered doormen – which appears to have contributed to the reduction in assaults. Similar results have occurred at other premises, and more doormen are now applying for the Course.

#### *Reduce the Number of Assaults Using a Weapon*

Since the implementation of the strategy the monthly average number of assaults involving the use of a bottle/weapon has fallen from 20 per month to just 3 per month. The training of doormen is also likely to have contributed to this sharp reduction.

The majority of assaults using a weapon continue to be caused by bottles – further training of doormen, coupled with the proposed introduction of bottle banks in close proximity of bars is likely to further impact on this number in the future. Police officers are now also actively confiscating drink from people drinking in the alcohol-free areas of the City and from underage drinkers, which should also impact on this objective in the future.

#### *Improve Police Crime Recording*

Various debriefings to all police personnel with a view to more accurate recording of crime data has taken place, resulting in better location and people information. For example, in the 12 months before the strategy 26.5% of assaults had a specific location named; in the six months following implementation 34% of assaults had a specific location named. This is contributing to more accurate Crime Pattern and Hotspot analysis, and therefore better targeting of resources.

### Other spin-offs from the Strategy

- The partnerships developed in this strategy are now utilised in implementing other POP projects in the City.
- CCTV staff have received further training from police CCTV liaison staff regarding more efficient operation of cameras – this has led to an improvement in the quality of tapes used in investigations for all crime types in the City Centre
- This project was the first attempt for police to use High visibility patrolling. Yellow jackets in the Streets have since been safely used for other operations in the City Centre
- The Video Identification Unit is now used to view tapes for crime types in the City Centre, including shoplifting and car crime. A rogues gallery is emerging.
- Press releases from the hospital had given cause for concern during the past few years as various reports have cited higher numbers of assaults than police figures suggest. During meetings with the hospital it emerged that a high number of assaults they were

releasing figures on were of a domestic nature, but this breakdown was not provided in the press. The recent partnership developed with the hospital staff has encouraged more responsible reporting to the press, reducing 'scaremongering' about the assault problem.

### Use of problem orientated approaches in Foyle DCU

The results of this project have far surpassed police and partner expectations, and highlighted the value of POP projects in crime reduction. The principles have been adopted as Best Practice within the DCU, and are regularly used in a variety of other problems, firmly backed by management.

The local Crime and Disorder Unit is now responsible for co-ordinating other projects, such as POP projects in local estates, as well as POP projects to tackle high-volume, low level crime.